

VZCZCXYZ0033
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSL #0041 0221516
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 221516Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0620
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 0051
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000041

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

PM/WRA FOR KATHERINE BAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2016
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: CLUSTER MUNITIONS ARE NOT LANDMINES

REF: STATE 06667

Classified By: DCM Lawrence Silverman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Karol Mistrik, MFA Director for Disarmament, OSCE and Counterterrorism will lead the Slovak delegation to talks on regulating the use of Cluster Munitions (CM) to be held in Oslo February 22-23. Mistrik recommended that the U.S. attend the talks as well, but did not deny that some participants in the talks are looking forward to "a second Ottawa process." Mistrik, however, does not believe this movement to regulate CM is comparable to the 1990s effort to ban the use of landmines and he pointed out that Slovakia - which, like the U.S., is both a producer and user of CM - would be seeking an outcome from the meeting that the U.S. can support. End summary.

¶2. (C) Mistrik was Deputy Chairman of the conference leading to the 1997 Ottawa Treaty banning the use of landmines. He said up front that many of the individuals involved in the current bid to regulate CM "cut their teeth in Ottawa or are inspired by that process." Mistrik believes there is a significant difference between landmines and CM, however. Landmines are "a relic of World War II with no real military utility." Cluster bombs are "a military product of unquestionable utility," and "very often the most humane choice of weapon." Most importantly, according to Mistrik, there is "no martyred British princess" to inspire the fight against CM. He did acknowledge, however, that memories of the Ambassadorships and promotions that fell to many of the architects of the Ottawa Treaty, himself included, are inspiring some of the architects of the Oslo conference, "especially the younger guys from Sweden and Norway."

¶3. (C) Mistrik said the mandate of the Oslo conference is to develop a proposal for further consideration within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). He explained the conference as being an initiative of a group of countries that includes Norway, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Sweden, Austria, Argentina and New Zealand (plus several others) that grew frustrated with the failure of the CCW to adopt even a deliberative (vice negotiating) resolution on the issue in November. Mistrik said the EU has taken a common position with respect to the conference in Oslo and that the goal is not/not to ban the use, production or sale of CM, but merely to agree on a proposal to specifically regulate their use, which would later be presented to the CCW.

¶4. (C) Mistrik has heard that Russia, China and India have all declined to take part in the conference and he seemed surprised to hear the U.S. may take part. He described the

possibility of the conference going forward without the U.S., China, Russia or India as "like a group of Bishops negotiating a treaty on adultery." Although the U.S. did not sign onto the Ottawa Treaty, Mistrik said that U.S. willingness to participate in the preceding negotiations was valuable, and led directly to the inclusion of a well-thought out verification regime. Mistrik encouraged the U.S. to work closely with the U.K. and France if it decides to attend the conference in Oslo, since these are the countries that restrained the EU position. He said Switzerland and Sweden are the most adamantly in favour of an all-out ban on the use or production of CM.

¶15. (C) Mistrik said he would recommend Mil-Mil talks on the CM issue if a formal offer of such talks is made. He also suggested the U.S. organize Mil-Mil conversations on the margins of the Oslo conference. Mistrik has requested an expert from the Slovak MoD accompany him to Oslo, but has not yet received a response.

¶16. (C) Comment. Mistrik is a seasoned diplomat and not-instinctively pro-U.S. He does not fail to express his strong disagreement with U.S. policies, even when the policies in question are not at issue. Several of his comments seemed to advise against U.S. participation in the Oslo conference, yet at the end of the meeting he reiterated that he recommends the U.S. attend and sought assurances that would be the message poloff communicated to Washington D.C.
End comment.
VALLEE